

NIFC News

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BLM Website Increases Safety in the Air Above Wildfires

Boise, Idaho –

Where there's smoke, there may be wildfire, and airplanes, and helicopters, *and* temporary flight restrictions or TFRs. Many fires mean many TFRs and lots of research for a pilot planning a flight.

This research has become much easier through an internet site designed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). All TFRs across the country – from wildland fires to national security restrictions – are portrayed on the web site to help pilots visualize the location and extent of the flight restriction.

“Our intent is to reduce the risk of mid-air collisions during wildland fire operations,” Dave Dash, BLM’s national aviation manager said. “We may have several air tankers and lead airplanes, plus numerous helicopters working together within a square mile. One aircraft inadvertently entering an area where this type of intense activity is underway can trigger devastating results.”

The BLM web site – airspace.blm.gov – updates flight restriction data every 30 minutes around the clock, seven days a week, and the information is reviewed constantly for accuracy. TFRs for wildland fires are identified on the site by the National Interagency Fire Center flame logo, and the site can be reached through airspace.blm.gov or the nifc.gov web site. Since the site was launched in July 2002, it has received about 1.4 million hits each month. The largest users include private and corporate pilots, the U.S. military, and air traffic controllers.

“As wildland fire activity escalates through the warm and dry summer months, we want to remind pilots that this web site is available and contains the latest flight restriction information across the country,” Dash said. “We want every aviator, whether managing wildfire, flying military missions or sight-seeing, to arrive safely at his or her final destination. The airspace.blm.gov internet site helps us ensure that.”

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